



NHL Executive Summary



Name of Property:	Taliesin West (Updated Documentation)
City, State:	Scottsdale, Arizona
Period of Significance:	1937-59
NHL Criteria:	2, 4
NHL Theme:	III. Expressing Cultural Values 5. architecture, landscape architecture
Previous Recognition:	National Register of Historic Places (1974) National Historic Landmark (1982) UNESCO World Heritage Site (2019)
National Historic Context:	XVI. Architecture S. Wrightian Frank Lloyd Wright and the NHL Program Resource Guide (2009, rev. 2022)
NHL Significance:	

- Taliesin West was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1982 under Criterion 4, for its nationally significant architecture, for the period 1937-38 which included only the first two years of construction. However, Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship developed the Taliesin West property continuously until his death in 1959. The new period of significance spanning 1937-1959 encompasses the years Wright resided at Taliesin West during the winter while continuing his practice and leading the Fellowship.
- Taliesin West is nationally significant under Criterion 2 for its direct association with architect Frank Lloyd Wright's productive life and career. During his lifetime (1867-1959), Wright was one of the most respected architects in the US, developing a uniquely American architectural style that utilized modernist concepts and informed global architecture through spatial, formal, material, and technological



terms. Taliesin West's initial construction over the winters of 1938-41 and the decades that followed coincide with what has been termed Wright's "Second Golden Age" (1936-1959), a period in which Wright enjoyed both extraordinary productivity and popularity.

- Wright and the Fellowship spent winters at Taliesin West until his death. During that time, Wright continued his architectural practice in concert with leading the training program, and as such, the property is directly associated with his productive work as both architect, spatial planner, teacher, and mentor. As argued in *Frank Lloyd Wright Buildings and the National Historic Landmarks Program*, "Taliesin West expresses not only Wright's mature architectural concepts but also his educational theories and visions of society."
- Taliesin West is nationally significant under Criterion 4 as an architectural masterpiece. The building and its site exemplify Wright's ethos of "organic architecture," or architecture in harmony with nature and landscape. The interplay of open and closed spaces, the adaptations to the desert climate, and the unique site-sensitive low profile set Taliesin West's design apart from not only contemporary works but from other works of Wright as well.

Integrity:

- The setting and location of Taliesin West within its surrounding desert landscape remain the same as when first established by Wright in the 1930s, as do the locations of the property's buildings and landscape features as they were successively developed during the period of significance from 1937-59.
- The property retains a high degree of design integrity, including building orientation, circulation through the site, decorative details, and design techniques employed to capture, direct, and diffuse sunlight.
- Material and workmanship integrity is seen in the use of "desert masonry" construction. As other materials proved themselves prone to rapid deterioration, they have been replaced with materials that mimic the original effect. Similarly, in the case of structural deficiencies, some reconstruction that incorporates new internal structural systems has occurred.
- Taliesin West has exceptional integrity of feeling and association as Wright's laboratory that employs his architectural vision, such as integrating buildings into the surrounding landscape, maximizing the effects of sunlight, and creating programmatic layouts that encouraged community and artistic production among the Taliesin Fellowship.
- In the decades since the NHL designation, portions of the desert landscape which inspired the design of Taliesin West and provided much of its raw building materials have lost integrity due to suburban development. To offset this loss, in 1999 the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation acquired a 19.5-acre triangular parcel of land to the north that contained untouched desert landscape.

Owner of Property: Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Acreage of Property: 489

Origins of Nomination: This update to the 1982 NHL designation corrects errors made in the original mapping and verbal boundary description, removes areas that have lost integrity, and adds parcels of the significant desert landscape owned by the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation that contribute to the characteristics for which the property was designated (per *CFR § 65.8a-b*). The update extends the period of significance to Wright's death in 1959 to encompass his full career and articulates the property's significance under Criterion 2. Lastly, the update provides a more thorough description of the property's resources.



Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: This NHL nomination will provide expanded and detailed documentation to allow for interpretation to the public the history of 20th Century architectural movements, and the central role of Frank Lloyd Wright in the development of distinctly American architectural styles.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of May 22, 2025):

- Frank J. Prozzillo, Jr., Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation

Landmarks Committee Comments: No substantive comments from the committee.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the acceptance of the NHL updated documentation for Taliesin West National Historic Landmark in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Advisory Board Recommendation: